3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
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[P 467-B] Teklum

178 the cave and that they are in communication
756 with him. But these claims are met with ex-
769 pressions of disbelief by the people. Almost everyone is convinced not only that the curers do not now talk with the ancestors but that the ancestors no longer look over them from the watchout hill outside their cave.

756 The loss of control by the curers is drama-
178 tized in the long passage quoted above con-
731 trasting the past and present treatment of epidemics. Formerly the two leaders of the curers consulted together and announced to the president that they had rid the town of evil. Now the curers as a group are ordered to come before the civil authority. There, in a [273] long examination called *?il yo?tan*—"taking the heart"—in which 18 liters of liquor are consumed, the assembled curers and civil authorities decide who among them is responsible for bringing in the witchcraft that is causing the epidemic. Later in the evening, [682] one of the curers is usually killed (cases 11 and 29, Table 1).

756 (2) *Conflict between the curers and the civil*
578 *authority*. The competition between the curers and the civil authority can be traced in a series of incidents beginning in the '30's and culminating in an open confrontation in the spring of 1966.

756 The first incident occurred in 1932, when
578 the town was still part of the neighboring
682 Ladino township.

683 [632] went and asked permission of the authorities to kill his enemy, a curer, who he thought was bewitching his brother-in-law. The president went to the house of the suspected witch with the order to imprison him. He said they were going to take him to the neighboring township center to put him in jail. The group of authorities set off with the suspected witch. On the way, another group met them and asked them where they were going. The president replied, "To H." The group that had encountered them asked if they would like a drink to heat their body. They gave one cup, and then another. Then they cut up the suspected witch with a machete and put his body in the cave of the ancestors. When the widow enquired the next day where her husband was, the president said that the man must have gone to the finca.

The ambush by the killers was prearranged in the town court, and the president covered their deed when questions were asked.

[622] In 1940, the leading curer of the lower section was president. When he killed a man who

273* 695 tional informal drinking segments may follow, but they will not necessarily take place on the cabildo porch, and the group may break up, so that drinking is simultaneously going on in two or three settings. All informal drinking rules hold from then on. The normal drinking performance following dispute settlement includes ceremonial drinking plus informal drinking segments which lead to drunkenness. The probability of this is expressed in text where an elder warns the wives of town officers that their husbands will sometimes return home drunk (see Chapter V for citation of text).

The escalation of conflict

273* 578 731 In the case where conflict is to be "settled" by increasing the jeopardy of the other party, aguardiente is supplied by the individuals who are interested in escalating the conflict. The aguardiente is supplied during the time when the conflict is "settled" rather than afterwards. Such a case is described in text as follows:

273* 578 731 539

K'ALAL LIHK K'OP E YUN SKA CAMEL SARANPIA YUN BAYAL XCAM *ALALETIK.

The fighting began because many children were dying of measles.

HA* SLIHKIL K'OP *ABI HTIHK' WINIKETIK LA SNOP SK'OPIK, YUN LA *OCEM CAMEL TA TEHKLUM.

The action began in the beginning because a group of men got together to talk about who had put the illness in town.

273* 578 731 539

HA * HIC LIHK SZOB SPISIL WINIKETIK TA TEHKLUM.

In this manner all the men in town began to get together.

HA* PRIMERA ZOBAWAN MAC'A TE SK'OKIK TA MUKAHEL E.

The first men to get together were those who had been to the funeral [of a boy who had died of measles].

HA* HIC LIHK K'OP *ABI LA YALIK TE YUN *AY MAC'A YOZES E CAMEL TA TEHKLUM.

In this way the action began, and they said that someone had put the illness in the town.

HA*LA YUN HIC BAYAL YA XCAM *ALALETIK.

And for this reason many children died.

HAYAN HIC LA SZOB SBA SPISIL WINIKETIK YUN CAMEL I.

Because of this, all the men got together, because of the illness.

TA SKA TRAWO LIHK YALIK HA* HIC LIHK SZOB SBAIK.

Because of the aguardiente they began to talk, and thus they began to get together.

LIHK YALIK YUN *AY SWINKLEL HAYUN HIC MUK'UB YUNIK HAL K'OP I.

They began to say that the illness had an owner and for this reason the excitement increased.

LIHK YUC'IK TRAWO YUN HIC *AY SPERSIK *A MAYUK XIWEL TA K'OP *A.

They began to drink aguardiente so that they would be strong, so that they would not be afraid to speak.

HAYUN NAL YA XKIXINTES SBAIK TA TRAWO YUN MILAWAN E.

For this reason, first they warm themselves with aguardiente in order to kill a man.

273*
578 YUN PLETO HA* HIC MAYUK XIWEL *A.
731
539 In order to fight without being afraid.

753 In conjunction with collateral evidence, this text provides support for the following points. One of the standing beliefs in Aguacatenango is that sickness of god /XCAMEL YU*UN TYOS/ is essentially curable. Measles is classified as such a
[754] sickness. When the children die in a measles epidemic, some "witch" must be laying on further illness components which cause the death. One mode of reducing the witchcraft component in the illness is to kill the witch or witches.

754 The problem of determining who the witch(es) may be in
755 such a case as this is very difficult. The well-defined and formally correct mode is to call together several of the curers, have them pulse the patient, hear their announcement that the sick person is suffering from witchcraft and insist that they name the witch or witches. The curers are likely to go as far as to indicate that a witchcraft component is involved in the illness, but they most often are unwilling to name an individual, as their name becomes associated with their testimony and the alleged witch and his kinsmen are likely to impose severe
754 penalties on the curer. The search for the witch, then, must go on, under the force of standing beliefs as follows: Individuals in the community may be assigned a witchcraft potential on the basis of a variety of evidence. In this case the text

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hilltop with a digging stick. He knelt and prayed, asking for rain. At that very moment, the rain came. He put the seeds in the holes he made, and from then on people have been planting in the hills.

Other saints are charged with providing rainfall. The saint of greatest importance in this respect is Santo Tomás, the patron saint of Oxchuk. Some Indians have gone to the church there to light a candle and ask for rain, and on their return the rains came. During an extended drought in August 1967, over one hundred people walked to Oxchuk to pray for rain. The people of Tzo?ontahal are somewhat bitter about the Oxchuqueños' neglect of Santo Tomás since over half of the town has converted to Protestantism. Whenever there is a drought, they blame it on the failure of the people of Oxchuk to take care of Santo Tomás.

In addition to the Catholic saints, the ancestor spirits help man to watch over the land. They are responsible for giving the rains in the planting period and early growing season. The fiesta on the Day of the Cross (Chapter 1) is primarily a plea for rain. Until the 1950s, the curers would hold a celebration at the Cave of the Ancestors to ask for rain during a drought. The waning belief in the presence of the ancestor spirits in the town has meant that there is less attention given to such fiestas. Some go to seek the ancestors in Chiapa de Corzo in the cave in which they are supposed to reside, as the following story illustrates:

One time my three brothers-in-law went to Chiapas to ask the ancestors for better crops. When they arrived there, nobody knew where the cave was. They said only a certain mayordomo there could find it.

Another time, two of the prayer-reciters went to the cave. They talked to the guard of the cave, saying, "May we speak to our ancestors?" The guard said, "Are you prepared? Did you bring two liters of trago? The ancestors like to drink."

The prayer-reciters went to get two liters of trago and all three drank it. While they were drinking, they saw a cow and chickens appear. The guardian said that if they came back in May with "food" for the ancestors —candles, incense, and firecrackers—they would get rich crops. I think the prayer-reciters succeeded because now they have a cow and chickens and a horse. They are afraid of the envy of their neighbors.

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People with lands in hot country recount that during droughts the Indians from the neighboring town of Chamula have held rainmaking fiestas for which they solicit contributions from other Indians.

The Chamulteco came to us and said, "Let all of us who have milpas contribute five pesos for a fiesta." He brought the candles. In the little hill there the people brought drums and flute. We ate chickens and drank liquor. For eleven hours he prayed, and in the afternoon it rained.

The *kuriketik*, rural inhabitants of the colonia of San Vicente who migrated to Amatenango from Chanal, have no irrigated lands and depend directly on rainfall throughout the growing season. Indians of the center know of their practice of sticking their digging sticks into the ground with the points toward the sky "to puncture the clouds" when they have planted their milpa, but they do not imitate this practice. Control over the supply of water in the irrigated lands has apparently led to the neglect of supernatural appeals even where the canals do not supply water. Under pressure of extended drought, they will resort to spiritual intercession through Chamula or Oxchuk practitioners in whom they have some faith.

Acquiring the protection of the gods does not obviate the practical activities necessary in the cultivation of crops. Fiestas for the saints are a repayment for services rendered in watching over the milpa. The sponsorship of fiestas for the saints by the community ensures the protection for all of the crops, and general crop failure due to drought or high winds is explained as a result of mismanagement of these community-wide fiestas. The offering of candles to the spiritual owner of one's own milpa is a kind of individual insurance policy for future crops as well as a repayment for the gift of the corn harvest. The peasant notion of surplus value is implicit in this reciprocal relation: the payment, or gift, of two candles to the milpa spirit is far less than the value of the harvest. But the account is balanced by the expenditure of this surplus in communal fiestas.

Pottery Production

Making pottery has been a speciality of the town since pre-Conquest days. The old site of the town contains sherds of pottery which is remarkably similar in texture, design, and form to the pottery made now.

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Chapter 6

Curing and the Curers

Sickness is a sign of upset relations between the spirits or people and those of relatives, neighbors, or places. In the curing ritual, the curers not only treat the disease, but also try to bring about spiritual readjustment by dramatizing the ill effects of animosity. Because they claim to be able to counteract witchcraft, the curers exercise a great deal of power. This power is limited by institutional requirements controlling entry into the profession and exercise of their skill and knowledge. The breakdown in the authority of elder curers during my study of the community, and their attempts to reinstate themselves, made explicit some of the structural principles of the institution.

The Curing Hierarchy

Recruitment into the hierarchy. Until the 1950s, each side of the dual division had an age-ranked order of curers and recognized the leadership of a single elder, called *statal ?u?ul*. The older, more experienced curers, called the *b'ankilal*, or elder brothers, had authority over the novice curers, called the *?ihtz'inal*, or younger brothers. With the breakdown of the hierarchy during my stay, this distinction was becoming less clear. In 1964 there were seven curers in Alannantik and six in Ahk'olnantik; on a return visit I made in 1967, their numbers had been reduced by homicide and exile to five in Alannantik and five in Ahk'olnantik.

Entry into the profession occurs during an epidemic when the civil authority calls upon the curers to gather in the town hall to determine who is bringing the "heat" that causes death from disease. The curers decide whether there are any promising young men who have the third soul, swayohel, which gives them the ability to cure. If a young man is deemed

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suitable, the president and judges give permission to the curers to allow him to enter the profession at this time. The novice provides three liters of liquor which are drunk "in common" by the curers and the civil officials.

There is some evidence that, formerly, novice curers were asked to yield the soul of one of their children:

My dead husband was given permission by Julian Gomez, the leader of the curers of Ahk'olnantik, to enter the curing profession. When my husband told me he wanted to cure, he said that Julian had asked him for a child "for the ancestors to eat." My husband was going to give a child of his brother since we didn't have any, but I said it would be a pity. Then he said he would give trago. This he did. I forget how many liters.

When the contagion came, the curers went to take out the heat. A policeman called my dead husband, and he went. The policeman said the leading curer had called him. The judges told him, "It is better for you to enter in common with the other curers."

He began to cure. The curers then asked what offering we were going to give.

"We have no children," said my husband. "We will give you liquor. I cannot give my brother's child or my sister's children."

He must have brought them about ten or twelve liters of trago and two packs of cigarettes.

The third soul, swayohel, may be acquired, or one may be born with it. Those who acquire the third soul by capture of the soul of a dead person within twenty days after the death are considered to be potentially dangerous. They are more likely to use the soul for evil than those who have acquired it from the ancestors at birth. Swayoheles can be acquired from a saint named ?Ahau in the neighboring town of Oxchuk.[1] The following account illustrates how one asks this saint for a swayohel:

If you go to the saint with a black face named ?Ahau with two candles of twenty cents you can ask for a swayohel. You say, "I want one č'ulel that is very strong. I have an enemy. I need one." You sleep there, and wake

1. Lombardo Otero (1944:73) says that in Oxchuk, Mukulajau, or Chulajau, is identified with Trinidad, and is associated with the pigeon, which is the animal spirit of powerful curers.

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"He looked for trouble!" Domingo replied.
I said, "You killed my husband!"
He said, "It was not I! It was not I!"
It doesn't serve to enter curing early. People will kill you right away. Another young man wanted to enter. The curers did not permit him since they said he was a witch. People heard he was a witch, and they killed him. He was the same age as my husband [about twenty-seven].

The curers who have survived to an old age were introduced into the profession by an elder relative. They choose their clients carefully, refusing to cure a man who is on the point of death, and remaining within their own section of the dual division. These rules of survival are ignored by some of the younger men who wish to impress their elders with their powers.

The changing image of the curers. The curers of today are unfavorably compared with those of the past who used their power for good. The prototype of the old curer was the fearful Tatik Ča?uk, Lord of the Lightning, possibly a local manifestation of the Maya god Chac.[2] The dialectic of power is exemplified in his control over beneficial and destructive forces. His beneficence is demonstrated in his ability to bring rain to crops, while his vengeance is revealed in lightning bolts which can kill people and destroy houses. Anyone who is struck by lightning is believed to have had some sin for which the Tatik Ča?uk has punished him. His destructive force is equated with a rifle—called "the elder brother of the Lord of Lightning"—and with the "heat" which brings death in illnesses. His habitation is believed to be the Cave of the Star where the heat which causes epidemics is found.

The curers were intermediaries for the Tatik Ča?uk in their control over both destructive and beneficial forces. Formerly, the swayohel of the curers patrolled the streets of the town to prevent the entry of evildoers bringing heat. It is in this role that they are referred to as me'iltatil. If an epidemic occurred, the two leading curers from each side of the town con-

2. In other Tzeltal- and Tzotzil-speaking communities, the god Ča?uk is named as the chief figure from pre-Conquest theology (Hermitte 1964, Holland 1963:93).

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sulted with each other to determine who was bringing in the heat. They privately disposed of the evil by causing the evildoer to die of an illness. At the time of my stay, suspicion of the curers meant that a public hearing was held in the town hall to determine who the guilty person was; usually one of the curers themselves was suspected (Chapter 9).

The curers formerly demonstrated their beneficial power by bringing rain during a fiesta held in the cave of the ancestors. This is described by an informant:

When the pueblo lacked rain in the growing season of corn in May and June, the leading curers went with the other curers, the fiscal, the alfereces, the mayordomos, and the women prayer-reciters to the cave. All the women carried candles of a peso or fifty-cent size and incense burners. They drank a great deal of liquor at the mouth of the cave and then entered to dance. The mayordomos played the guitar, the drum, and flute as the women danced and the curers prayed to the me?tiktatik. There used to be a spring in this cave, people say, and the ancestors granted water from it when they were given a fiesta.

The last fiesta for rain occurred about 1950. The whole town contributed two pesos for the liquor and candles. The leading curer then was Juliano, a man recognized for his powers in curing and in bringing rain. He told the people that he spoke to the me?tiktatik who, he said, were dressed in the old style [a shirt worn over short cotton pants still used by older men of the town, and the handwoven hat worn by alfereces today]. The curers told the people that it would rain, and the afternoon of the fiesta, it came down hard.

There is no longer faith that the ancestors live in the cave, nor that the present curers could speak to them if they did.

The growing discontent with the curers, the suspicion that they are responsible for much of the witchcraft, is reflected in the account of an older informant:

The curer O. K. told me that the curers ate the spirits of sick people who were going to die. The sick people would come to ask the curers for

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796 154 [273] [276] [522] is served when the expectations are that the individual will feel embarrassment. These occasions formerly occurred when the company arrived at the house of the alférez before the dance and when the alfereces mounted their horses. Cigarettes signal relaxation, and when the first round of cigarettes is served in the house setting, the company abandons formal restraints and, led by the chief nakáwane, indulges in joking.

541 522 177 178 *Carnival and Easter Week.* Carnival has changed over time more than any other religious ceremonial in the town. Until five years ago, a group of masked jokers visited the houses of the captains of the fiestas. They wore Ladino clothing, including vest, pants, and shoes, and they hid their faces behind masks or painted them black. They danced a "Ladino dance" (paired couples), first in the church and then in the houses of the alfereces. While dancing, they made sexual allusions about unmarried women. Their joking emphasized their strangeness to the villagers; for example one of the jokers might say, "You do not know what type of person I am. An airplane made me." They carried small stuffed animals which they made "cry." Pretending they were the husband of a woman, they would go to her and tell her to take care of her "baby." The woman speaker would sometimes respond to their jokes, saying, "Who are you? You are not good looking, you little black boy. You must be from Germany or from the other side of the water. Maybe you are from Patwitz or Yetawitz, and your father is kurik." People say the custom was discontinued because it was too expensive to give liquor to the jokers.

541 262 794 177 178 [731] Another carnival custom which has been lost is the "common meal" of squash on the five Fridays of Lent. Formerly the wives of the four kobraria brought squash from hot country, cooked it, and brought two gourds each to the church. The assistant divided it, giving two pieces to each of the mayordomos. This custom was stopped during the typhoid epidemic of 1928 and has never been resumed because, it is said, the people did not want to lose work time. These changes may be a response to the priest's attempts to modify some of the excesses of carnival. Whether or not this is so, the people prefer to attribute change to their own decisions.

796 The events of Easter Week as recounted by an informant are outlined below.

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Eight men of Alannantik wanted the interim president, Simón to remain as president. But the people of Ahk'olnantik did not want him to remain as president. The townspeople began to talk, saying, "Why should he remain as president since he stole twenty bulls? We don't want him. Let us get another president. We shall walk with Ceferino."

They wanted me for president since I was first regidor. It is for this reason that I entered as president, but I didn't think that I would be able to stay on as president. Simón received an order from the [state] government that he should return as president. He came with soldiers, and when they took me out of office, the lieutenant said to Simón, "Now you enter."

And so I gave over the archives and seals and everything in the presidency to Simón, and I left the presidency. And the people saw that it was the order of the government, and they did not say anything. The town remained silent.

The incident is given as it was related to me in Tzeltal. I have sorted out the steps in which the conflict developed in order to clarify its meaning.

1. The traditional checks and balance system of the civil authority over the curers was initially upset by the entry of a leading curer into the post of president.

2. When he committed a murder while in office, the judges seized control and had him put in prison.

3. His replacement by the síndico who was from the same side of the dual division, aroused the opposition of the people of the opposite side, Ahk'olmantik, who believed that the epidemic, which followed the president's removal from power, was caused by the curers of Alannantik under the direction of the president who was in jail.

4. The leaders of the revolt in Ahk'olnantik chose as their replacement the first regidor, Ceferino, who was from their side.

5. Leaders from Alannantik rejected this replacement and were able to get official backing from the state government to replace their representative.

The process illustrates the way in which a conflict, precipitated by a clash between civil authorities and the curers, was cast into the idiom of struc-

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When he arrived here, he did not hear any word that they would kill him. He persisted in his custom of stealing. And the pueblo seized him and put him in prison. The whole town seized him although he had heard no word.

They tied him to a tree and said to him, "You do not have shame. You are a curer, father of the pueblo, [respect term for curer], and yet you behaved badly and truly stole. The town sees you are a bad man, Emilio. They call you their father, but now I am going to tell you that you ought not to be called father. You're a bad one."

He wanted to be called father, but he was only a bad one. He returned again to San Cristóbal because of two crimes. He did not hear the words. He remained in prison, and when he came out someone else came and killed him.

Since 1938, nine of the thirty-seven homicide cases on which I collected data (Table 29) were killings of curers. The increasing frequency of such killings reveals the loss of faith in the guardianship role of the curers, but along with this, retention of belief in their power to work evil.

In the series of successful confrontations, the civil authority has gained strength and overcome some of the fear of the people. In May 1964, during a severe contagion of measles, a rumor started that the disease was being spread because of witchcraft. The president called together the curers. The consensus of this gathering was that a certain curer of Alannantik had buried the "heat" which was causing the deaths in the milpa of his enemy. The people of Alannantik gathered with the curers and the civil officials in the milpa of the "enemy" to dig it out. The curers dug out a charcoal brazier which is the sign of illness and threw it in the Cave of the Star. That evening the suspected witch was killed, presumably by his neighbors.

In the most recent confrontation between the civil authorities and an individual curer, in March 1966, the civil authorities showed a united front in denouncing the use of witchcraft to threaten any official. The entire group of practicing curers from both sides of the dual division were called to witness the denunciation before the assembled civil officials in the town hall. The only one absent was the curer accused of attempting to cut short the life of the president because of envy of his position. The assembled

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554 the status. Community integration is achieved at the expense of limiting the range of roles through restricted recruitment and validating mechanisms.

621 794 [182] *Alternation and linkage in office-holding.* The principle of alternation between civil and religious posts serves to integrate these officers in a single functioning system and prevents the development of segmented groups. The alternation of offices between sides of the dual divisions helps to integrate the village by pairing or alternating them in the same office. Some roles served as links between the institutional domaines. Principales are the primary symbolic leaders of both hierarchies since they are chosen from among men who have completed service in both hierarchies. The alfereces formerly symbolized the unity of the civil and religious branches in the transfer of banners from the cabildo to the church and in other ceremonial duties.

621 624 794 [642] [184] The regidores and judges have remained identified with the civil authority in Tzo?ontahal, although in other towns in the area they have become almost exclusively identified with the religious hierarchy (Cancian 1965). The regidores were formerly involved in religious affairs during the household celebration for the installation of the new alférez. At this time they were called personaetik from the Spanish term persona, or personage.

731 756 178 621 Events requiring community action reveal some of the links which unite officials who play roles in different institutional settings. On the occasion of an epidemic, curers are called before the civil authority to "give an account" of who is causing the witchcraft. Formerly the curers were linked to the civil hierarchy by a system of social control in which the principales, as elders, reviewed their actions in guarding the safety and health of the community. This system of checks and balance has been broken by the shift in power from the principales to the president.

794 621 182 The nakawanehetik provide the links between the household and the civil and religious hierarchies. They transmit the knowledge of ritual prayer and acts and officiate at the inauguration of officials. They serve as stage directors in maintaining the traditional household rituals and in ensuring continuity in public ceremonials.

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credit to insects who carried it from the hills. Still another myth synthesizes both pre-Conquest and Catholic agents: San Antonio, seeing an insect bearing a kernel of corn, persuaded a woodpecker to break open the rock which blocked the entrance to the hill where the corn was stored and then organized the insects to bring forth the corn. The contradictions in these myths do not motivate the people to bring the several versions into line with one another because the rituals associated with beliefs concerning crops provide an overall insurance rather than a specific contract. The Indians do not trust their security to any one saint or even group of deities. The two candles lit in the milpa following the harvest are an offering to the "owner of the earth"; along with this, offerings of corncobs are made to the saints in the church and to the house saint. Even the birds are left an offering of corn kernels in the fields after the harvest so that they will not be jealous of the farmer.

These myths fail to provide specific charters for action. What they do provide is a set of dispositions to behave in certain ways. The underlying disposition is that of self-imposed guilt and recrimination. The ancestors left their cave because the people failed to give them a fiesta; the spirit of money left the town because the religious officials in the past failed to adorn the church and improvidently strewed the floor with green peso notes in place of pine needles. Sickness and poverty are attributed to their own failures.

Another disposition is that of appeasement through ceremonial entertainment. This is carried out in the fiestas for the spirits of the church and the spirits of the heaven just as for the spirits of the house, caves, springs, and hills surrounding the town. Community-wide disaster is interpreted as a direct result of failure to perform rituals establishing reciprocity with the spirits. When individuals face crop loss, they review their own ritual obligations to see what went wrong. The curing ceremony is another effort to appease the devil whom the witch has persuaded to give illness to his victim.

A third such disposition is to project human conflict into the supernatural sphere. The conflict between Santa Lucía and the patron saint of Oxchuk, Santo Tomás was taken to be the reason for the church tower being

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181 support for cultural independence as economic interdependence grows.
105
182 3. *The stability of the society varies directly with the effectiveness of its procedures for transforming old power positions into ceremonial posts.* The community demonstrated the effectiveness of its technique of cooling off old power-holders as new leader usurped the authority of the principales. The struggle going on between the curers and the new civil leadership had not been resolved in ceremonial absorption of the curers' power when I left the community. The community was ridding itself of these fear-provoking agents of the supernatural by resorting to homicide. The loss of the institution of the alférez marked the waning of these old techniques of ceremonially incorporating leadership into a traditional hierarchy and linking civil office with religious obligations.

4. *The lability of the society varies directly with the gap between expectations and experience.* The Indians condition themselves to expect the worst and so are not disappointed by it. They pray only that they may maintain a given level of suffering and poverty. They are not caught up in that revolution of rising expectations that makes for discontent when experience does not match them. The Indians know they [175] are better off than they were, and they contrast their present prosperity [731] with the famine of 1915 when revolution and banditry depleted their crops and cattle, and with the typhoid epidemic of 1928 when hundreds died and the rest did not have the money to bury them properly. An attitude of pessimism about the future limits the problem of adjusting to it or of making adaptations to improve it. One could predict neither revolution nor moral collapse.

5. *The lability of the society varies directly with the degree of dissonance between traditional and contemporary interpretations of events.* The old explanations are still applied to current events. Disaster is blamed on individual or communal failure to carry out ceremonials. Sickness and death are attributed to witchcraft motivated by envy or malice. The paranoic theories of human nature are confirmed by every illness or death that occurs. Even the gods are characterized as envious and vindictive. Containment of blame for misfortune within the community minimizes the political involvement of Indians in the wider society and limits the changes that might affect them.

626 556 the few economic alternatives offered to an Indian who wants to, live an Indian life among other Indians, in peace. In this sense, Amatenangueros and Aguacatecos are no "penny capitalists" of the type described by Sol Tax (1953). But it is also true that, like the Panajachel Indians, they desire to have more for themselves and their children: money for security against sickness, death, [146] bad crops and other misfortunes. They also want better clothing, more meat in their diet (the amount of animal protein in their diet is extremely small by western standards) and small extra luxuries which have been introduced into their culture, little by little, by the local Ladino merchants: flashlights, mirrors, etc.

627 556 754 [731] Nevertheless, a wealthy man brings upon himself the antagonism of the other villagers, who, in search of a scapegoat during times of stress (such as a village epidemic) would not hesitate to accuse the rich man of being responsible for bringing the misfortune to the town because of his evil spirit, nor hesitate to kill him. Even if people find a man has a good crop, somebody can assume that, because his own crop failed, the other man has "stolen" the soul of his corn or if a man receives a large inheritance, somebody could accuse him of having killed (by witchcraft) the relative from who he inherited it. It takes a good deal of diplomatic skill and a strong control of the sources of gossip to manage to [753] keep oneself clear of such accusations. On the other hand, villagers are afraid of showing excessive wealth (according to community standards) unless they bring upon themselves the other face of witchcraft: supernatural sickness produced by envy. Even

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango .
Aguacatenango

241 433 then, each season is a question mark, an equally unpredictable year of plenty or a lean year.

184 323 241 433 434 In Amatenango, when the crop fails or is poor, the income of the villagers can be compensated by producing more pottery. This is obviously not so in Aguacatenango. If hunger threatens the families, the result is a higher migration rate or an increase in the number of men leaving town to work part-time in the fincas.

184 166 464 731 The result of having an alternative form of income within the homestead in Amatenango is that the village keeps its income more balanced year after year, and that the village as a whole has a reputation of being richer than the other communities.

184 434 462 562 In Aguacatenango, the women are an economic burden. The men are very aware that they themselves "do all the work." Women have long and leisurely afternoons which are spent sitting on their porches grooming, chatting, or visiting. Men complain of this, saying "Women cannot realize how hard a man has to work. They complain of not having this or that, but they do not know. . . ." In Amatenango, on the contrary, women are important producers, men and women sharing, equally, the responsibility of supporting their families.

Thus, in the one case, Aguacatenango, the work of women has a marginal, undeterminate value in an economic milieu in which they have no cultural alternatives to convert their labor into goods or subsistence necessities; in the other case, Amatenango, the labor input of women represents about half of the total productive efforts of the villagers.